

Weed Awareness

Weed Free Forage Certification Program

You can prevent potential noxious weed infestations by insisting on Certified Weed Free forage. As a buyer, you should be aware that noxious weed infested forage products can cost you hundreds or even thousands of dollars down the road. Ask your forage supplier to have their hay certified prior to harvest. Forage growers must call the Lancaster County Weed Control Authority one to two weeks prior to harvesting. There is no charge for the field inspections. There is a small charge for the cost of bale tags.

Nebraska carries out its Weed-Free Forage Certification Program in accordance with the standards of the North American Weed Management Association standards.

Certified weed-free forage products include: straw, alfalfa/grass hay, forage pellets/cubes, alfalfa hay, grain hay and grass hay. Weed free forage is required on many U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands, in National Parks, Bureau of Reclamation land, military locations, tribal lands as well as National Fish and Wildlife refuges. The Nebraska Department of Roads requires weed-free forage on highway projects. Restrictions may apply to other lands administered by provincial, county, state or federal agencies.

For More Information

If you have questions about certification regulations or weeds not allowed in certified forage, please see the North American Weed Management Association's (NAWMA) Web site at <http://www.nawma.org> for a complete list of weeds and regulations.

Lancaster County Weed Control Web Site



The Lancaster County Weed Control Authority Web site at

www.lincoln.ne.gov/cnty/weeds provides very useful information about the Authority's program and activities and about weed control and management.

The site is continually being updated.

Via the Web site, you can:

- Contact the Weed Control Authority.
- Make a weed complaint.
- Make a real-time search of current weed inspections.
- Look at a map of noxious weed locations in the county.
- See the latest listing of possible weed special assessments.
- Study noxious weed and weed abatement laws and regulations.
- Learn about noxious weed identification.
- Read about the County Noxious Weed and City Weed Abatement Programs.
- See plans and reports.
- Check on noxious weed controls.
- Learn about managing natural areas in an urban setting.
- Test your knowledge about Nebraska weeds.
- Link to other weed control Web sites

Riparian Area Concerns

Purple loosestrife is continuing to invade the streams in and around the city of Lincoln. A total of 67 wild infestations of purple loosestrife have been found since 2001. The seed source for these wild plants is from the ornamental lythrum plantings that have been made in yards throughout the city. Since purple loosestrife was designated a noxious weed in Nebraska in 2001, almost all homeowners have removed these plants from their yards. The Weed Control Authority has notified almost 1000 homeowners that they need to remove their ornamental purple loosestrife plantings. These homeowners, along with many others, have voluntarily done so. The wild plants need to be found and controlled before their populations explode and form solid dense stands of purple loosestrife in the Salt Creek System. This would severely reduce the wildlife habitat and other uses. Purple loosestrife is not desirable wildlife habitat and inhibits recreational uses.

There are two additional invasive non-native plants that are of a concern to riparian areas. These are saltcedar and phragmites. A few plants of both have been found adjacent to water and in the saline wetlands in and adjacent to Lincoln.

Saltcedar has been planted as an ornamental in some

yards in Lincoln. It was designated a noxious weed in Nebraska in 2004 and can no longer be sold or grown. It is a shrub or small tree with cedar like foliage with deep pink to almost white flowers that crowd in many slender spikes, forming dense masses at the top of the branches. The saltcedar's bark is a reddish brown while the wood is soft and white. The smooth bark ridges and furrows with age.

Common reed or phragmites, is a tall, perennial grass that can grow to over 15 feet in height. Once introduced phragmites, can quickly take over a wetland community, crowding out native plants, changing wetland hydrology, altering wildlife habitat and increasing fire potential. Its high biomass blocks light to other plants and occupies all the growing space below ground so plant communities can turn into a Phragmites monoculture very quickly.

These three invasive plants are a threat to the wetlands, streams and riparian areas in and



Phragmites along N. 27th Street

adjacent to the City of Lincoln. It is taking a considerable effort to try and get purple loosestrife under control. It would be wise to deal with saltcedar and phragmites now before they advance further. We can deal with saltcedar since it has been designated a state noxious weed. In order to take immediate aggressive actions with phragmites, it would need to be petitioned to be brought under the county control program. Until phragmites becomes a designated noxious weed, its control and management will depend upon the voluntary cooperation of landowners.

The assistance of the public is requested in reporting any sightings of these three plants. All reports will be acted upon. The locations will be mapped and the landowners contacted about control of the plants.



Saltcedar

New Statewide Weed Mapping Program

The Nebraska Weed Control Association along with the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) have been working on developing a statewide GIS mapping program to manage invasive plants. This system uses a popular GIS map interface known as ArcIMS from ESRI. ESRI provides industry-leading software to GIS professionals.

The Nebraska Weed Control Association has paid for the custom coding required to create this system, from the NDA's invasive plant assistance fund, which was received from the Nebraska Environmental Trust organization.

Once the system is completed, the NDA and counties will be able to keep track on noxious and invasive weeds in Nebraska, as well as, track treatments and create online reports in an easy to use interface. Some of the features include a user management system, add and modify record set, create map and GPS points of invasive plants and print off various records for users.

The planning for this type of



system has been discussed for two years. Nebraska Weed Control Association hopes to start testing the system in January of 2007 with training to begin in February 2007. The custom work is being done by an outside vendor, GIS Workshop of Lincoln, Nebraska.

The goal is to have one database for the whole state based on standards and creating a system of knowledge sharing and communication with everyone concerned about invasive plants.

The county Weed Control Authorities will input and manage the program in their counties. Cooperating partners and other interested parties may provide location of infestations to their county weed control authority

for entry into the program. The program will serve as a tool for each of the counties in managing their programs. Not only will the system have information on location of infestations of invasive weeds, but it will also include inspection information, treatment provided and control results. The detailed information will only be available to the Weed Control

Authorities and the Nebraska Department of Agriculture.

General information, location and extent of infestations will be available to the general public, state agencies and NRD's for such things as developing plans on how to deal with water-depleting plants invading riparian areas. Landowners will be able to access and print off maps to help in developing their weed control plans.

The program is expected be operational by March 1, 2007 at www.newweedmapper.org. Data will be entered throughout the 2007 inspection season. Any questions about the program should be directed to Chris Kelly at ckelly2@unl.edu or 472-9059.